

## **Market Enhancement Opportunities for Water-Efficient Products**

### **Public Meeting: The Roles of Water Utilities, State, Local, and Regional Governments, and Non-Government Organizations**

#### **Water Efficient Product Labeling Program: An Environmental & Consumer Group Perspective – Ken Kramer, Sierra Club**

##### **Key Points**

##### **The Importance of Effective Water Conservation Efforts to Environmental Protection**

- Reduces the volume of water that must be diverted from environmental flows necessary for maintenance of water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.
- Reduces or at least delays the pressure to build water development projects that may have adverse consequences on fish and wildlife habitat and other environmental values.
- Supports the concept of “loving within our resources” that may have positive effects on the approach that people take in the management of other resources, such as energy

##### **The Prospective Value of a Water Efficient Product Labeling Program**

- The need for consumers to have adequate information upon which to make product choices – for example, to be able to act upon their goals of saving money or protection the environment.
- The efficiency of building conservation choices into every day product selection by consumers – facilitating the ability of consumers to be water-efficient by providing the products that are able to help them reduce water consumption

##### **The Issue of Mandatory Versus Voluntary Programs**

- Recognition that a voluntary program for water efficient product labeling is unlikely to provide the level of water conservation that a mandatory program might produce (for example, the lack of universal participation by manufacturers of certain products)
- Nevertheless, the value of a voluntary program versus “no program”
- Need for even greater attention to the design of a voluntary program to ensure that there are sufficient incentives (for manufacturers, retailers, and consumers) for participating in the program to make it cost-effective and ultimately successful.

##### **Considerations in Designing a Successful Voluntary Program (not an exclusive list)**

- Providing consumers with adequate information upon which to make choices (that includes, at the retail level, supplemental information to that provided by manufacturers that will show potential cost savings for water-efficient products on an annual basis)
- Making consumers aware of the existence of a program and its potential benefits to them (through, for example, and aggressive effort using public service announcements, water utility bill inserts, partnering with non-government organizations, press events, and easily recognizable logo, and other mechanisms to achieve widespread public awareness)
- Promoting the program by making consumers aware of all of the benefits of such a program or at least tailoring the emphasis on certain benefits in promoting the program among certain sectors of society (for example, an aggressive outreach to hunters and anglers, through their membership organizations and licensing officials, to promote water efficient products as a way of assuring adequate water for fish and wildlife)

- Providing training and incentives for retail sales staff to promote water efficient products in the interactions with consumers
- Factoring into the labeling criteria to the extent possible information about the long term maintenance of the water efficiency of certain products
- Promoting other water conservation efforts that will enhance the prospects for the success of a water efficient product labeling program (for example, promoting water conservation pricing mechanisms on the part of water utilities that will not only achieve reductions in use directly, but will also make it more likely that consumers will seek products that will be more water efficient)

**A Water Efficient Product Labeling Program - An Important Part of an Effective Water Conservation Effort but Not Sufficient Alone in Achieving Necessary Water Reductions.**